

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 EUR-12 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 H-02

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SCA-01 INSE-00 PRS-01 /054 W

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R 302030Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6582

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 5020

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, PINS, CI, AR

SUBJECT: CHILEAN NATIONAL MUNOZ SALAS SEEKS RESETTLEMENT OUTSIDE
ARGENTINA

REF: BUENOS AIRES 4734

1. CHILEAN MUNOZ SALAS REMAINS IN UNHCR-SPONSORED HOTEL IN BUENOS AIRES AWAITING A VISA AFTER INTERVIEWS WITH FRENCH, AUSTRALIAN AND AUSTRIAN GOVTS. HE DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE IN DANGER OR PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT HIS SAFETY, ALTHOUGH HE IS DETERMINED TO LEAVE ARGENTINA FOLLOWING HIS AND 13 OTHER REGISTERED REFUGEES' 11-HOUR DETENTION AND MISTREATMENT BY ARGENTINE PROVINCIAL POLICE IN MENDOZA JULY 2.

2. ACCORDING TO MUNOZ SALAS' STATEMENTS TO IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES OF ONE EMBASSY, HE WORKED UNDISTURBED FOR THE SAN JUAN PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF MINES FROM 1973 UNTIL MARCH 26, 1976, TWO DAYS AFTER THE MILITARY TAKEOVER. SALAS SAID THAT WHEN HIS FAMILY WAS TORTURED BY NATIONAL POLICE ON MARCH 26, HE FLED TO THE UNHCR REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE SOCIAL ACTION COORDINATOR IN MENDOZA, WHERE HE WAS REGISTERED AS A MANDATED REFUGEE AND HOUSED IN A SAFE HAVEN.

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3. HE SAID THAT ON JULY 2, HE AND 13 OTHER REFUGEES WERE FORCIBLY TAKEN FROM THE SAFE HAVEN TO THE LOCAL POLICE STATION AND WERE BEATEN, TORTURED AND HUMILIATED BY ARGENTINE POLICE IN THE PRESENCE OF AN ARMY INTELLIGENCE OFFICER. ELEVEN HOURS LATER THEY WERE RELEASED AND RETURNED TO THE SAFE HAVEN. MUNOZ SALAS SAYS HE WAS RECOGNIZED AND TAUNTED FOR HIS UNION PAST, INFORMATION WHICH HE CLAIMS THE SOCIAL ACTION COORDINATOR MUST HAVE GIVEN THE POLICE. HE ALSO BLAMES UNHCR FOR NOT PROVIDING ADEQUATE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO HIS FAMILY (AN AMOUNT WELL ABOVE THE MINIMUM WAGE) AND FOR NOT REPRESENTING HIM VIGOROUSLY TO FOREIGN EMBASSIES WHERE HE IS SEEKING VISAS.

4. MUNOZ SALAS, WHO WAS NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE CHILEAN MINE WORKERS FEDERATION, FREELY ADMITTED HE HAD BEEN AN ACTIVE, MILITANT MEMBER OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY IN CHILE BEFORE PINOCHET, BUT STATED HE HAD NOT INVOLVED HIMSELF IN POLITICS OR UNION MATTERS IN ARGENTINA.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PAROLE, REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BUENOS05020
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760295-1256
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976076/aaaaaesn.tel
Line Count: 79
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ORM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 BUENOS AIRES 4734
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 MAR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 MAR 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <29 MAR 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CHILEAN NATIONAL MUNOZ SALAS SEEKS RESETTLEMENT OUTSIDE ARGENTINA
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, CI, AR, (MUNOZ SALAS, MARIO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006